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THE GENERAL'S NEPHEW.

SEVERAL years before the introduction of Minié-rifles and tunics, when Brown Bess with a well-hammered flint was considered the most efficient weapon of the British soldier, the regiment to which I then belonged was stationed, during its Indian tour of service, in the Sultryport division, commanded by Major-general Sir Hannibal Peacocke, K.C.B., one of the best whist-players and worst general officers in the service. He had entered the army young, and having both luck and interest, rose rapidly to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, when he was put on half-pay, and, having served almost exclusively on the staff, as ignorant of regimental duty as a man well could be. During the years which followed, he endeavoured, by assiduous attention to the duties of a man about town, to fit himself for future command; and on promotion to the rank of general, attended every levee of the commander-in-chief, asking for employment, and became a regular hanger-on at the Horse-guards, who, either to get rid of his importunities, or oblige his brother-in-law, Lord Cawood, gave him a division in India. Favoured child of fortune as he was, the general was always grumbling at his ill-luck, particularly at the card-table, though he could not bear to hear any one else do so, and would always demolish the complainant's grievance by quoting some greater misfortune which had happened to himself, making the lesser mischance appear contemptible and insignificant. If a defeated adversary made any remark on the number of rubbers he had lost, the general would exclaim: 'You don't call that a run of ill-luck, do you, sir? Why, I played whist regularly every night for eight years, and never held a trump the whole time.'

'But, Sir Hannibal,' rashly suggests an incredulous sub, 'you must have dealt every fourth round, and taken the turn-up card into your hand.'

'By no means, sir; with my usual luck, I positively made a misdeal every time.'

The youngster is silenced; and the triumphant general makes a mental *mem.* that so wide-a-woke a young gentleman is just suited for the agreeable task of the next treasure-escort, which amiable intention he generally carried out with praiseworthy fidelity.

The general had never been married; but he brought out a nephew with him, who he requested might be gazetted to the first vacancy occurring in any of Her Majesty's regiments in the Sultryport division. In those days, commissions had not been thrown open to public competition; preparatory examination was undreamed of, and popular opinion

unanimously pointed out the greatest fool of the family as the fittest for the army.

No rational doubt could be entertained that Lord Cawood's second son was perfectly eligible on this score to wear a red coat: he accompanied his uncle to India; and soon after their arrival, the *Gazette* informed us that the Honourable Peregrine Falcon Rooke had purchased an ensigncy in our regiment.

There was at the time, I fear, a sadly democratic feeling in the corps, as some of our slips of aristocracy had not been very favourable specimens; and others who had left the regiment soon after going on foreign service, had made rather hard bargains with their successors. We were not, therefore, inclined to think better of the young hand because he happened to be an earl's son; besides which, we were shortly afterwards ordered in from our out-station, where game was abundant and duty light, to the formality and field-days of division head-quarters; and we all felt sure that our recall from our happy hunting-grounds was chiefly in order that the junior ensign should be under the avuncular eye, and have the benefit of his countenance and support on first joining.

We arrived in Sultryport at the beginning of the hot season, and being a new station, houses were so scarce there that five of us were fain to content ourselves with the joint-occupancy of a splendid mansion, consisting of one large room, with an enclosed verandah all round. That is to say, we remained in the house by day, and slept at night in tents pitched close outside, until, as the rainy season drew near, we were driven from their comparative coolness by sand-storms occurring nearly every night, which forced us to take refuge in the house.

It was an unusually hot season even for that climate; the rains delayed their coming; the hot wind blew from sunrise till midnight; there was a lurid haze in the scorching atmosphere, through which objects loomed large as if seen through a fog. Our only chance of getting any sleep was to keep the punkah going all night, for which purpose we had a relay of coolies; much-enduring individuals, without any peculiar characteristics mental or physical, except an inordinate capacity for sleep and extreme scantiness of drapery, who, in consideration of the monthly guerdon of eight shillings, without board or lodging, undertook that one of their number should always be ready to fan our fevered brows. Like most natives, they possessed the power of instantly composing themselves to sleep at any hour of the four and twenty; but at night, in particular, the exercise of their monotonous vocation seemed to possess an effect as irresistibly somniferous as the branch dripping

with Lethan dew did on Palinurus. Somnus relaxed their wearied limbs; the long punkah, under which all slept, stopped, and we awoke, bathed in perspiration, to abuse the coolie, rub our mosquito bites, and doze off again. The paymaster, a choleric little Welshman, being the most wakeful of the party, took upon himself the task of keeping the coolies on the alert, for which purpose his cot was placed in the centre, with an abundant supply of ammunition heaped alongside thereof, in the shape of the united boots and shoes of the entire party, besides a collection of sundry miscellaneous articles, such as glove-trees, cricket-balls, old books, &c., which might, on occasion, be converted into projectiles. Even with this formidable armament, and the fear of punishment before their eyes, the coolies did snooze occasionally; but retribution swift and terrible followed, from the avenging slipper of the paymaster.

I do not think we were as grateful to him as we ought to have been for his exertions, as we found that the noise produced by the shower of missiles, the crash of broken glass, or the piteous accents of the coolie deprecating master's wrath, protesting he was murdered, or imploring assistance from the governor-general and East India Company, was quite as fatal to 'tired nature's sweet restorer' as the want of cool air.

We accordingly had a tall three-legged stool constructed, on which the coolie on duty was always perched. It gave him great facility in pulling the punkah, and proved an excellent seat as long as he remained awake, and sat upright; but the moment he began to nod, the rickety tripod was overbalanced, and the whole concern upset bodily. This we found a most effectual means of murdering sleep, as, after performing half-a-dozen of these involuntary somersaults, the coolies learned to keep themselves awake, and the punkah going.

Whilst we, in a semi-delinquent state, were endeavouring, by expedients such as these, to render the heat somewhat less unbearable, we were constantly tantalised by seeing the junior ensign in undivided possession of an excellent house adjoining ours, which he did not offer to share with any one.

Young Rooke seemed an ungainly, rather silly lad, without much harm in his composition, or anything aristocratic in his manners or appearance, but with an overweening sense of his own importance. At drill, he was the most awkward fellow I ever saw; it required a couple of sergeants to put him in the proper position of a soldier, and the moment their hands were withdrawn, he relapsed into his usual slouching attitude. He had a habit, too, of knocking one foot against another like a horse cutting, by which he was always losing step; and when he shouldered his musket, it seemed an even chance whether he sent the bayonet into his own cheek or his neighbour's. All rebukes and corrections he received with so well-satisfied an air, that his amendment seemed hopeless; and Wright, our adjutant, was in a state of despair at having such an unpromising recruit to deal with, declaring his life would be shortened by being daily compelled to witness so melancholy a spectacle. Now, next to a pretty girl and a well-drilled battalion, there was nothing Wright liked so much as a joke, particularly a practical one; indeed, he loved it not wisely, but too well, and had often got into trouble by indulging his facetious propensities.

He longed to play off some trick upon Rooke, which might soothe his own feelings, and diminish the other's self-importance, but found it difficult to get an opportunity for doing so, as the youngster seldom came to mess or mixed with his brother-officers, being unwisely kept away by his uncle, the general, which made him even more unpopular than

he would have been at any rate. Accordingly, he gravely informed Rooke, that, as he had got on so far in his drill, it was time for him to proceed to more advanced exercises, and commence learning the drum, for which purpose the drum-major would provide him with an instrument, and attend at his quarters for an hour daily, after morning parade—a private hint being given to the instructor, that the lesson should always be given in the verandah, which was in full view of the mess-room. There we used to assemble every morning for coffee and billiards, but both were neglected for the pleasure of seeing Rooke pacing up and down with a drum suspended from his shoulders, practising the initiatory exercise called 'mammy daddy,' which is, in fact, the *do, re, mi* of all who learn this sonorous instrument.

To explain for the benefit of the uninitiated, it may be briefly described as follows: The tyro's hands being arranged in the proper position, he gives two taps with the right one, then withdrawing it, holds the drum-stick perpendicularly by his side, repeats the same process with the left, and so on *ad infinitum*. It is rather monotonous work, and, at the best of times, makes the performer look rather foolish; but when Rooke's awkward movements and shambling gait were contrasted with the splendid proportions of the drum-major, who owed his situation to the fact of his being the handsomest man in the regiment, the effect was inexpressibly ludicrous, and formed a never-failing source of amusement to those who witnessed it. The pupil, however, had not advanced beyond these elementary studies, when his further progress was stopped by his uncle coming in one day to pay our colonel a visit.

Sir Hannibal Peacocke, like most ignorant men, was very fussy about trifles, and constantly getting hold of some new hobby, which he rode until he tired of it, or some fresh one came in his way. Having that morning mounted a new one—a novel method of putting on the knapsack without straps, which proved a complete failure—he came in to display his equitation for the colonel's benefit. Having taken as much exercise in that way as he felt disposed for, the conversation turned on his nephew, who, the general remarked, he was glad to hear was getting on so well with his drill.

'I am sorry I cannot agree with you, general,' said the outspoken Colonel Hardy, 'for really I never met a more stupid lad in my life; he seems to make no progress, notwithstanding all the trouble taken with him.'

'I am afraid you do not take the trouble of making yourself acquainted with what passes in your regiment,' replied Sir Hannibal, with some asperity; 'for I can tell you the adjutant is so well satisfied with his proficiency, that he has allowed him to commence learning the drum.'

'The drum, general! you cannot be serious; there must be some mistake. Surely no one ever heard of such a thing as training an officer to a bandsman's duties.'

'My nephew never told me a falsehood, even in jest, Colonel Hardy; and you will find what I have stated to be perfectly correct, if you ask your adjutant, who I saw writing in the next room when I came in.'

Wright was summoned, and the moment he entered the room, perceived that the conjunction of two such luminaries boded him no good; and augured from the ominous silence which greeted his entrance, that, as he expressed it, the devoted storm was about to descend on his thundering head.

'Have you been playing off any of your jokes on Mr Rooke?' sternly demanded the colonel.

'Jokes, sir!' demurely answered Wright; 'I assure you it is no joke trying to teach a man of his

stamp. I'm nearly heart-broken from him myself; and the sergeant-major threatened suicide if compelled to continue drilling him. I could not knock anything into his head, or out of his heels; so I thought it no harm to try whether his hands could not perform some military movement. He is getting on very well at it; and I am sure the general would be quite pleased to hear the fine tone he brings out of the instrument.'

Had the general not been present, it is probable that the affair might have passed off as a harmless trick; but restrained by this, and a sense of duty, the colonel frowned down his rising mirth, and said: 'You have done wrong, sir, to allow your private feelings to influence you in the discharge of your duty; you have abused the authority I gave you over a young officer, and endeavoured to make him the butt of the regiment. This mock-instruction must be discontinued; and I trust you will see the propriety of apologising to Mr Rooke for what has passed. I trust you are satisfied, Sir Hannibal.'

'No, I am not satisfied; very much the reverse,' said the general, his choler rising as he became gradually aware of the extent to which his nephew and himself had been imposed on, until between the state of the thermometer and internal warmth, he seemed on the point of spontaneous combustion. 'Go to your quarters instantly, Mr Wright, and consider yourself under arrest.'

Whereupon the culprit left the room without speaking, and the general soon after took his leave, vowing vengeance against Wright; declaring that he would make an example of him, and that he was fully determined to bring him to a court-martial for such outrageous conduct.

To all this tirade, Colonel Hardy wisely made no reply; but, soon after the general's departure, sent him a note, saying that he hoped Sir Hannibal would, on mature reflection, view the case more favourably, as Wright was a young man of excellent principles, and a first-rate officer, though sometimes led away by high spirits; that it would be impossible to frame charges for a court-martial without making his nephew—he did not venture to say himself—the laughing-stock of the service; and, moreover, that if ever the matter came to a trial, he would feel bound to state that Sir Hannibal Peacocke, a general officer commanding a division, fully believed that learning the drum formed an integral part of an officer's education.

By this time, Sir Hannibal's wrath had time to cool; and seeing the cogency of these arguments, he replied that to oblige Colonel Hardy, he would treat the case as leniently as his duty would permit; that Mr Wright might be released from arrest; but as he could not pass over such conduct without publicly expressing his disapprobation of it, the lieutenant in question should attend at the general's quarters the following morning, when, in the presence of all commanding officers and staff in the station, he would receive such a reprimand as the major-general might deem it fit to administer.

Sir Hannibal Peacocke was a particularly neat man; the scrupulous exactness of his person was only equalled by the cleanliness of his house, and elegance of his bachelor *ménage*. Every one else's linen looked yellow in comparison with the immaculate purity of his; a speck on his white trousers, a soil on his boots, a stain on his table-cloth, or a particle of dust on the table itself, made him quite uncomfortable; but the presence of a fly or spider set him well-nigh distraught, and he would interrupt the gravest conversation to make slaps at an intruding blue-bottle, and prided himself not a little on the dexterous manner in which he crushed the offender between his extended palms.

Next morning, at the hour indicated, commanding officers and staff assembled as directed at the general's quarters, all in full-dress, to look as imposing as possible. When Sir Hannibal entered the room, without noticing any one, he fixed his eyes on the wall, which a large speckled spider was slowly ascending on his return from a successful foraging expedition, taking with him a supply of ant-meat for the nourishment of his family.

The beaver, loudly summoned, warily and slowly approached the unsuspecting spider, and when arrived within springing distance, made a dash at it with the cloth he held in his hand; then removing it triumphantly, displayed the crushed remains of the spider, surrounded by a gory stain, on the wall. Instead, however, of the approbation he looked for, his master was so enraged at the mark on his spotless chunam, that he pulled a flash pink turban off the bearer's head, wiped the obnoxious stain with it, then threw it in his face, and kicked and pommelled him out of the room, to the great amusement of those who witnessed this practical commentary on the general's favourite exordium against maltreating native servants.

Then gravely seating himself at the head of a table covered with writing materials, Sir Hannibal motioned the other officers to chairs on either side; and they had hardly time to compose their faces, when Wright entered, looking so preternaturally solemn, that any one who knew him, would at once have suspected there was some mischief brewing.

Knowing Sir Hannibal's entomophobia, he had employed some of his spare time in capturing a number of flies and immuring them in a paper-box, perforated with innumerable pin-holes, in order to keep its inmates in a state of active vitality.

This he held inside his shako with one hand, and by keeping his finger on an orifice in the lid, let them escape when he wished. The general, not being gifted with much extempore eloquence, had written the wiggling he intended to administer, and now commenced reading it aloud.

'Lieutenant and Adjutant Wright, I regret'—Buzz, buzz went an audacious blue-bottle within an inch of the pretorian nose. Slap, slap from the general, and the enemy retreated in good order, leaving him master of the field.

He had hardly recommenced reading, when he was again interrupted in a similar manner; but this time he had better success, for the intruder was destroyed.

Complacent at the successful result of his *coup de main*, he made a third essay.

'Lieutenant and Adjutant Wright, I regret to find that'—Here a score of flies, rampant from their newly acquired liberty, made an onslaught, together with such a brisk hum of insolent defiance, that, dropping the paper he held, the general vigorously smote the air, in a vain attempt to rid himself of his persecutors.

Imitating the example of their chief, the other officers rose to assist him in banishing the unwelcome visitors.

Furor arma ministrat; each seizes what he can lay hold of—books, cocked-hats, and hand-punkahs are converted for the nonce into fly-flappers. A dragoon major, more zealous than skilful, grasped a long ruler sabrewise, and making 'cut two' in most approved style, missed the blue-bottle, and nearly floored the garrison-surgeon, whose bald head it encountered in its descent. The adjutant-general, in making a vigorous sweep with his arm, knocked off the commissary's spectacles; and the latter functionary, purblind from their loss, and surprised at such an unlooked-for assault, upset the ink-bottle in groping to recover them, dashing its contents over the formidable foolscap whereon the reprimand was written,

and extending its ravages to the snowy integuments which covered the general's nether man.

Soluntur tabula risu. Such a scene of confusion ensued, that Sir Hannibal, finding it impossible to restore order, dismissed all present, intimating, however, at the same time his intention of re-assembling them at some future time for the same purpose.

It would seem, however, that a convenient time for the purpose never came, as no one ever afterwards heard Sir Hannibal allude to the subject; nor, stranger still, does any mention of it appear in the life and memoirs of that gallant and distinguished officer, published after his lamented decease, several years subsequently, and it has consequently remained unchronicled up to the present moment.

THE LATE SAMUEL BROWN.

WHEN a brilliant and powerful intellect has passed away without leaving any written works behind, it is difficult to make the world believe in what it has lost. The deep and subtle influence which a great man leaves on other minds by personal association, can neither be told nor accounted for; and those who loved and honoured the dead, must be content with their own profound conviction of his greatness. But the case is even harder when something is left—good, indeed, and precious, but utterly inadequate as the expression of the power or possibilities of the writer. To leave such fragments uncollected, and suffer them to be lost among the mass of ephemeral literature, would be wrong; but to have them set up as the measure of their author's mind, would be still more unjust to his memory. The difficulty of deciding between these two risks must have been felt by the editors of these Essays; for, beautiful and interesting as they are, they are infinitely below what Samuel Brown might and would have done; and it would be most painful to those who eagerly watched the promise and growth of that noble intellect, to think that these few and scattered utterances should be in any way looked upon as its whole result.*

In the generality of obscure geniuses and possible great men, common sense refuses to believe, and most justly; for it is a second-rate talent only that needs to be nursed by circumstances into greatness. If there be one spark of the real divine fire of true genius, it can never be quenched by external conditions; poverty only braces it—contest only rouses it—sorrow only purifies it—and, sooner or later, it will find its appointed mode of expression. But over genius itself, disease and death are victorious; and Samuel Brown was early called to a martyrdom that only ended with his life. After a youth of strenuous labour and extraordinary attainment, just when his mental powers were matured, the instruments of knowledge within his grasp, and visions of long-sought truths opening brightly before him—then came the fatal disease which held him fast for ever. From this time, says the preface, 'and till his death, seven long years, he was probably never for an hour, except in sleep, free from pain, and often in extreme agony—his existence being little else than the fulfilling of his capacity for suffering. When in Russia, he had typhus fever; and it is likely he never was sound afterwards, and carried his death within him in the form of an internal disease, necessitating pain of the sharpest and steadiest kind. He died in the full exercise of his intellect and affections, having fought his disease to the last.'

How nobly he bore this stern fate, how brightly the soul shone out through all these clouds of suffering, how humbly and thankfully he spoke of all the deeper

things that pain and trial had taught him, cannot be told here. But there are many who look back to his example with loving gratitude, and treasure his words in their inmost hearts as a precious legacy of strength and consolation. 'How pathetic to think that this intense and bright nature—

Appearing ere the times were ripe—

should so "soon come to confusion," that he should suffer as he did, and die with little else fulfilled but pain—his hopes withered, his secret purposes broken off, his years unaccomplished, fame and a great place in the world's history, merely seen from under the opening eyelids of the morn, and then vanishing away; his sun going down while it was yet day; the tree of mortal life withering in all the leaves of his spring—all this is strange and sad; but what in this world has not in it something both sad and strange?'

Thus much it seems necessary to premise before speaking of the merits of these Essays, for some of them were written in extreme youth, and while they overflow with its fire and generosity, they also bear the marks of it, in occasional rashness of conclusion and extravagance of words. Others were composed in the rare intervals of comparative ease which occurred during his last years of suffering and weakness, and we can but look with tender admiration on the spirit which could so far overcome pain and exhaustion as to write them at all, while we wonder at their brilliancy and power. The range of subjects they embrace is very wide. Though science has the larger share, art and poetry are treated of with the insight that comes only from sincere love and feeling. A few of his own poems are in the first volume, and are very pure and fine; but it is rather in his prose writing we feel what a true poet he was. There the bright imagination continually lights up the sternest subjects, not with conscious rhetoric or fine writing of any sort, but with a pervading feeling for what is lovely and picturesque, and the fine instinct which seizes the noblest and most poetic aspect of everything, and revels in it with that enthusiasm which never fails to awaken a corresponding delight in the reader. It is the mixture of poetic feeling and calm reasoning which gives its chief charm to the book.

The first volume is mainly devoted to the history of chemical science, and part of it is a sort of reproduction of the brilliant lectures which Dr Brown delivered in Edinburgh in 1849, and of which those who heard them will be glad to be reminded. However unacquainted with science the reader may be, he will find in the series of Essays which commence with 'Alchemy and the Alchemists,' some of the most fascinating sketches that can be conceived. 'The playful and apparently successful childhood of chemistry may be said to have passed among those young-souled Greeks from whom phlogiston came down. They asked such profound questions of nature that they could not understand her motherly responses, yet the very putting of those questions foreshadowed the whole history of the science. Its busy but little-doing boyhood was spent in the east, under califs and physicians whose very names are fragrant with romance; its ardent and imaginative pubescence, in the unbroken Christendom of the middle ages, amid the hum of scholasticism and under the shadow of Gothic architecture; and we have just seen something of its sturdy youth of somewhat positive effort during the reign of phlogiston. The fifth of its ages, that of victorious and self-confident manhood, now offers itself to the attention of the historical student.'

Along this pleasant path, so full of variety and interest, we are carried in a series of vigorous and characteristic descriptions of the lives and labours of workers in chemistry, beginning with the Greeks,

* Lectures on the Atomic Theory, and Essays Scientific and Literary. By Samuel Brown. Edinburgh: Thomas Constable & Co.

and then panning among the oriental alchemists, whose mystical theories have caused their earnest investigations of natural facts to be undervalued—'sincere, devout, industrious men, who, toiling away among their crucibles and furnaces, discovered many new facts and new processes, and did many a good thing'; and next, among their European successors; where, foremost in his own school, and mighty among all schools of natural science, in all time, appears the great name of Roger Bacon, one of whom England has just cause to be proud; but his legendary fame as a magician has eclipsed his true glory as a man of science. That he believed in the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone, like the rest of his contemporaries, is confessed, but he did not devote himself to searching for them; and 'in truth,' says Dr Brown, 'we should never look at the little particular beliefs and notions of great spirits in the history of science, but to their great ideas, otherwise we shall run the risk of despising men so exalted in character as to remain for ever incapable of despising us.' And again: 'There is indeed no room for national or epochal vanity in the study of the history of science; there is rather occasion for humility and emulation; for those old men worked with grand ideals and small means upon an obdurate and an unbroken soil, while we stand on fields which they have ploughed, armed with an elaborate instrumentation, and too often guided by ideals which savour more of the shop than of the universe.'

The sketches of Paracelsus and the rest of that race are vivid and interesting, but they cannot be quoted without spoiling them; for the history must be read as a whole, and the thread of their real discoveries followed, as it runs bright and clear through the strange webs of their romantic fancies, and still more romantic lives. In the next essay on 'Phlogiston and Lavoisier,' we pass through another long epoch of true experiment and mistaken theory, and read the stories of Beecher and Stahl, Priestley and Cavendish, Black and Watt, till the young Lavoisier appears, with the inexorable balance in his hand, to change the whole form of chemical science; to open a new path to all succeeding philosophers, and to perish in the very midst of his labour, and in the zenith of his powers; one amongst a batch of victims in the high frenzy of the first French Revolution. The two or three pages in which his short life is related are full of pathetic beauty. A brilliant and genial essay on Sir Humphry Davy, full of cordial appreciation of his character and discoveries, worthily completes this striking series, and is in itself a delightful piece of biography. With one more short extract, we must close this volume:

'There are poets who wonder at the spectacle of such keen spirits as Humphry Davy, for example, labouring with might and main at the dry births of stone and iron, when they might well be abroad among the strong and the beautiful, stirring the life of man in its august depths. But a man must work where he is placed; and he must also obey the hint of his peculiar talent, else he will never do the most he can for the race and for himself. These are two of the great rules of duty. There is little matter what a man finds to be his proper task, so he rest not until he have won all it can teach him; so he relax not until he have made the most of it for the world; so he relent not before he has adorned it with his proper virtue, and ennobled it by his proper genius. Truth is a globe like the world; and it is of small moment where you begin to dig, for you will come as near the centre as another, if you dig deep enough. It is at the same time an important, though a secondary duty of the industrious miner, to ascend every now and then from his particular shaft, both to see what others are about, in case he should become the

egotist of a single pursuit, and to refresh himself with the inexhaustible variety of nature and of life.'

The rest of the Essays are on a great variety of subjects, and we can do little more than name a few of them. Among the most interesting are those on George Herbert's poetry; on 'Physical Puritanism,' including vegetarianism, hydropathy, &c.; on David Scott the painter, a most touching account of that great but wayward genius, who, like Samuel Brown himself, died before he had accomplished half his work; as a tender and friendly memoir of the artist, and as a piece of general art-criticism, it is a striking and excellent essay. 'Ghosts and Ghost-seers,' the last of the Essays, is also one of the best, and contains some of the most striking remarks. How true and well put is the following:

'Few people are aware of the extreme difficulty of the art of simple observation. That art consists not only in the ability to perceive the phenomena of nature through uncoloured eyes, but also of the talent to describe them in unobstructed and transparent words. To observe properly in the very simplest of the physical sciences, requires a long and severe training. No one knows this so feelingly as the great discoverer. Faraday once said that he always doubts his own observations. Mitscherlich, on one occasion, remarked to a man of science of our acquaintance, that it takes fourteen years to discover and establish a single new fact in chemistry. An enthusiastic student one day betook himself to Baron Cuvier with the exhibition of a new organ—we think it was a muscle—which he supposed himself to have discovered in the body of some living creature or other; but the experienced and sagacious naturalist kindly bade the young man return to him with the same discovery in six months. The baron would not even listen to the student's demonstration, nor examine his dissection, till the eager and youthful discoverer had hung over the object of inquiry for half a year; and yet that object was a mere thing of the senses! In a word, the records of physical science are full of instances in which genuine researchers—men formed by nature and trained by toil for the life of observation—have misstated the least complicated phenomena. Nor would the intelligent public fail to be amused, as well as astonished, if they only knew how very few of the noisy host of professing men of science, in even this matter-of-fact country, ever discover a single new fact; ever describe with irreversible fidelity a new phenomenon of any significance; ever add one true word to the written science of the world.'

With these words, important to every aspirant after real knowledge, and to every lover of exact truth, we take leave of this remarkable book, earnestly commending it to a close and attentive perusal.

THE CHANNEL BRIDGE.

ONE of those little difficulties which are common to the matrimonial state, even among the best regulated couples, are constantly occurring between my wife and me with regard to a continental tour. So surely as the autumn shows its face, she wants to visit that 'dear darling Paris,' or that 'exquisite Chamouni,' or some other absurdly belauded spot beyond the sea, instead of being content with the bracing airs of Brighton, or the yellow sands (and slippers) of Margate or Ramsgate. She affirms that there are no dresses to be got in Regent Street fit for a lady to wear, and no mountains worthy of the name to be seen in all Great Britain. To this I reply, that if such be the case, she must abandon her outer garments altogether, and content herself with a comparatively level country, for that out of England, or I'm a Dutchman, she does not get me to stir. Now, the true reason of this I do not care to own to her, and shall therefore

carefully keep this particular Journal out of her sight; but the fact is, that I become so absolutely and hopelessly wretched so soon as I set foot on board a steamer, that I am well determined never to encounter the misery of it again. Of course, the sea has a good deal to do with it; but the steamer—the rolling, the throbbing, the heat, the panting of the steamer—is quite sufficient for this result, without the sea. I am rendered intellectually an idiot, and physically a helpless log, from the instant the terrible yell of departure is raised by the escape-valve, and when the first half-turn of those hissing wheels gives me a whole one.

The arguments I address to her ear are national and patriotic; such as, how right it is that every Briton should spend his money in his own country, and by no means pour it into Frenchmen's pockets; with other even nobler sentiments, which I have culled diligently from the newspapers of my native land; but my real and sole objection—which I keep, as I have said, in my private bosom—is simply to the sea-passage, the crossing of the Channel. I know that she who 'halves my sorrows, and doubles my joys,' as the poet satirically sings, would urge—before she gave up the contest as hopeless, and began to call names—that it was 'only a little suffering after all,' and 'the inconvenience is over in no time,' and I should not be able to convince her to the contrary. The term 'suffering' does not in the least express the mental and bodily agony of my position on ship-board; and after I land—after I have been carried on shore inanimate—I don't recover for a week.

'Never,' quoth I, the last time I was dropped like a sack on Folkestone pier—'never, if I know it, and remain in my right mind, do I catch myself on board ship again.' This resolution I have kept, and mean to keep; but yet, may be, I may take my wife to Paris nevertheless.

The French engineer, Mathieu, so long ago as the First Consulate, and when railways were entirely unknown, considered the scheme of a roadway under the Channel practicable, and laid it before the great Napoleon. More recently, other Frenchmen of science have proposed various plans for land-communication between England and France, under much more favourable circumstances. One of these ambitious projectors has within the last few months procured for himself something more than interest and attention. A commission of eminent engineers appointed by government to report upon his stupendous theory, has returned a favourable verdict. It has, moreover, recommended that twenty thousand pounds should be granted for experimental examinations. Finally, and above all, Napoleon III. is a believer in the matter himself. The submarine ground has been accurately surveyed already, and nothing is wanting but the following little preliminary arrangements to the tunnel of M. Thomé de Gamond. His scheme is doubtless worthy of our highest admiration, but still I cannot dismiss from my mind his aristocratic name. What chance, I wonder, upon this side of the Channel, would an engineer of the name of Tommy Gammon have, who proposed such operations as these:

To tear up rocks, and having carried the same out to sea, to drop them in the Channel.

To form thirteen islands in that fashion in the said Channel.

To dig down through the above islands into *terra firma* under the sea, and there to begin the tunnel, east and west.

There are a few other difficulties to be overcome, whereof one is the formation of a sort of Swindon Station in mid-channel, with a well-staircase leading up to an artificial island in the open air; but they are scarcely worth dwelling upon in comparison with those we have mentioned.

The great objection which attaches to M. de Gamond's tunnel, in connection with the trip of myself and my wife to Paris, is, that I know she will never be got by any means to travel by it. She will not even go to Bath on account of the existence, between our home and that city, of the Box Tunnel. Her behaviour during any subterranean passage—whenever I have caught a glimpse of her by light of lamp or shaft—is ridiculous, and personally uncomfortable in the extreme. She shuts her eyes very tightly, takes her under-lip between her teeth, puts a finger into each of her ears, and, in short, assumes a state of physical tension, which it would be impossible for her to maintain during half the time consumed by this proposed subterranean journey. As far, therefore, as we two are concerned, M. Thomé de Gamond might just as well never have existed; but I am by no means inclined to say the same of Mr Charles Boyd, of Barnes, Surrey, the projector of the *Marine Viaduct*, or *Continental Railway Bridge*. I have his pamphlet now lying before me, written with all seriousness and gravity, and with a charming section of the viaduct, by way of illustration, on the scale of an inch to a hundred feet, and shewing the greatest depth of the Straits of Dover, and the relative space afforded for the passage of shipping. The book is of a yellow cover, like a *Bradshaw*, and of so amusingly convincing a character, that one is quite disappointed not to find the hours of starting of the super-channel trains, both ordinary and express, week-day and Sunday, at the end of it.

The marine viaduct will consist of a succession of tubes 50 feet deep by 30 feet wide, made of wrought-iron, riveted and braced together, interspersed with ventilators and sky-lights, and supplied with the ordinary lines of railway within. This is to be supported by 190 towers, and to be raised, one tube at a time, to the required height of 300 feet above the level of the sea, by means of hydraulic machinery placed in pontoons. This great elevation will admit of the passage of the tallest ships in the highest tides, with 45 feet to spare, in case of vessels being built of unprecedentedly large dimensions. The space between the towers will be sufficient not only for three line-of-battle ships to sail through abreast, but even for three *Leviathans*, should so many giant brethren ever chance to be keeping such close company. Each tower will be of 100 feet in diameter, and, after rising upon its pedestal 260 feet, is to be continued 60 feet above the viaduct for the formation of a light-house, and again 50 feet higher still for that of a belfry or gong-tower, and for a central air-shaft for the viaduct.

These light-houses, whose illuminating surfaces are to be forty-three feet in diameter, are to reflect a bright red light on the south side, and a vivid blue one on the north, in order that vessels may clearly ascertain their own position with regard to the Channel Bridge. The belfries will hold a gong—a bell not being loud enough, and a whistle liable to be confused with that of the steam-engines—to be struck by a hammer propelled by clock-work. The light-houses are to be lit up at sunset throughout the entire length of the bridge by electricity, and the same power will set the gongs sounding in case of fog. All the towers are to be fitted at water-mark with fenders, consisting of spindles of wrought iron, very thickly coated with India-rubber, and made to revolve vertically in an iron framework attached to the tower bases, in order to repel collision; so that any vessel concussioning not at right angles with the fender, would be simply sent on her way. The towers are to bear the arms of France and England alternately; and in summer-time, on occasions of any increase in the Napoleonic family, will, I daresay, be tastefully decorated with flowers. Thus far, every part of the scheme looks

not only practicable but alluring—only we have yet to inquire, 'upon what are these towers which support the viaduct to stand?' This, as it seems to me, is an almost insurmountable difficulty, but not so does it seem to Mr Boyd. He proposes to form, as foundations for these towers, enormous pedestals, which will be formed by sinking into the bed of the Channel blocks of stone each of several tons' weight, securely riveted through their centres with iron bolts, and with their connecting faces strongly cemented, so that a succession of blocks will form one ponderous and immovable mass. The operation of placing them—this art of sinking—is to be conducted by means of machinery on board ship, or on pontoons at anchor; 'so that each block may gradually sink therefrom into its proper place below, first ascertained by the compass-bearings on deck, and by divers, who will be employed with diving-bells to examine the bed of the channel, to arrange, secure, and connect the blocks and other materials as they descend: and who are to communicate with the workmen on board by signal-lines and speaking-tubes. In addition to the blocks so placed, strong iron grapnels chained together at short distances apart will be fixed around and to the base of the pedestal, to prevent any movement of the blocks when once in position.' The bases are to be 300 feet square, and the pedestals will gradually rise at an angle of 75 degrees until they reach the level of the sea, and there form an insular plain 40 feet high by 150 square, for the reception of the tower. The French terminus—as in M. Thomé de Gamond's plan—is to be at Cape Grisnez, which, however, being only 147½ feet above the sea, will require to be brought to the same elevation as the English terminus at Dover, of 300 feet.

'To relieve any anxiety that may be entertained by the proposed union of Britain with the continent, it is intended that the English approaches shall be commanded by the batteries of Dover Castle, and that a battery shall be erected to cover the French terminus, as a part of the viaduct could then be suddenly disconnected without damaging the whole structure; and when hostility ceased, the injury done might be repaired in a few weeks, and the traffic be readily resumed'—an arrangement for destruction and reparation which seems to me to be a very pleasant satire upon war.

By the detailed official statement of the commerce between the United Kingdom and the continent, and by the calculations made thereon by Mr Boyd of the probable sources which will make his marine viaduct their channel, it seems that the necessary outlay for this ambitious project will be returned to an enterprising company in eight years; the various items of each outlay being nicely estimated to a pound, and amounting in the aggregate to the trifling sum of thirty millions.

'It is calculated that the entire structure can be concluded and thrown open to public traffic in three years, as the *whole* of the pedestals, with their assigned towers, can be erected simultaneously; the workmen being lodged upon, or rather over, the spot which is the scene of their labours, in vessels prepared for that purpose. The tubes may be also constructed simultaneously upon shore, so that the entire edifice may be erected almost in the same space of time which is devoted to one pedestal, tower, and intermediate tubes.

Finally, says Mr Charles Boyd, 'This bridge will form the high road to Europe, India, China, and all parts of the Mediterranean, and testify to the World, by its visible presence, the Power and the Unanimity of the greatest Nations of the Earth;' in addition to which—to descend to small letters and the practical—there will then be some probability of my wife and myself recrossing the British Channel. The fact of the light of the sun illumining this viaduct by day

seems to be of great importance in the sense of comparative safety it will convey to the passenger; while the circumstance of it being admitted through a sky-light will prevent him seeing the horrors of his way, and also, perchance—for a glimpse of the tossing ocean would be sufficient for me—from getting seasick. For persons of stronger stomachs, there might be easily constructed a promenade—protected, of course, by balustrades—above the viaduct, where sea-air might be imbibed as on a pier, at a certain charge, or which might be used by an active pedestrian instead of the railway; a turnstile being placed at both its French and English terminations, as at the Middlesex and Surrey ends of Waterloo Bridge.

HINTS TO NOVELISTS.

The novelists are, after all, 'dull dogs.' Travelling in one continual narrow round of characters and relations of character, they never observe the infinite variety of others which go to form the web of society. Always, with them, the rich man is an oppressor or a fool, and poverty the inseparable associate of talent, learning, and virtue. Always the new rich man is vulgar, and a despiser of all left behind him in the race; always the governess a paragon of the amiable and accomplished, amongst mean, harsh, ungenial employers; though, strange to say, when she sets up a boarding-school, she is just as sure to be a grasping, pretentious, hypocritical, pupil-starving humbug. A person bearing the name of step-mother never can do anything that is right. In an action at law, justice, as a matter of course, is exclusively on the side of the party whose circumstances are the meanest; only, law being so costly, the really poor man seldom gets his rights advocated. It is almost absurd to insist how partially all such things are true. Yet we may just take leave—for the information of these slaves of the conventionalisms of their art—to assert, that we continually meet rich and titled men who are neither fools nor oppressors, and generally find talent, learning, and virtue in tolerably good worldly circumstances; that our experience finds self-raised men often possessed of the most cultivated tastes, and rather humble in mind and modest in their social predilections, even where their origin is not generally known; that, singular as it may appear, a governess is now and then unreasonable in her expectations amongst people immensely her superiors in both amiableness and accomplishment, while, on the other hand, the mistress of the 'institution for young ladies' is frequently a painstaking, conscientious, and essentially kind-hearted woman struggling with a thankless profession. So also step-mothers in real life, so far from being necessarily harsh to the young brood they have adopted, are often only too kind and forbearing, as fearful to abuse that power in correction which a real mother would have used unsparingly. So also, we have known poor people prosecuting unjust or imaginary claims at law, and thus inflicting infinite annoyance and damage upon rich people who had been their best benefactors. In all of these actual relations of life there is surely a rich fund of new material for the fictionist, if he would open his eyes and see it. Why does he not give us, as a new kind of comedy, some of the persecutions and hardships suffered by rich people? Why should we not have from him a tragedy founded on the sufferings which a jealous, rancorous mother—for such a character exists—has it in her power to inflict upon her children? A well-treated governess who *would* be unhappy, a kind step-mother, a worthy boarding-school keeper, a penniless raiser of vexatious lawsuits—all of them creatures of frequent occurrence in actual life—are all perfect novelties

in fiction, and would therefore be sure of a good reception.

One part of the principles of social life, which has never been apprehended by novelists, and is little observed by men generally, but is a most important thing in our ordinary experiences, is that regarding the feelings which actuate us in the formation of acquaintanceships and friendships. There is here not merely ignorance, but much positive mis-take. When Smith and his family decline the offered society of Jones and Jones's family, there is never any other presumption in Jones than that Smith has been determined in the matter wholly by some external considerations, as that Jones is a man of comparatively little means or influence, and that there is to be nothing gained in the eye of the world by knowing him. When Brown chances to be drawn on by fortune to a prominent and brilliant position, and gets new friends, then are all his old ones jealous if he abates in the least in the attentions he formerly paid them, as understanding that he now looks down upon them. Now the truth may be, nay, generally is, that Smith finds Jones and his connections unfitted to his tastes, or moving in a wholly different round of sympathies and interests, and very naturally reserves himself for friends who are in these respects more suitable. So also when Brown's position in life is changed, he necessarily comes into contact with new people, who must in a great measure engross any time he has to bestow on social pleasures; without any failure of good feeling towards old acquaintances, he cannot give so much time to them, perhaps cannot give any; one thing, in short, is superseded by another. Or with changed circumstances have come changed tastes and new sympathies; so he no longer finds the enjoyment he did in the society of those old acquaintances. Surely, in a world so full of change, this should not excite very much surprise. And there is surely no great difficulty in seeing how it all comes about. Community of tastes, sympathies, and interests mainly determine us in all these matters. Yet there is no subject on which the truth seems more screened from the common view.

For much of what is complained of in the common world on these subjects, there is a ground in rationality, if our self-love would only allow us to see it. When Hugh Miller rose from his original condition of a stone-mason to be a leader of public opinion and a cultivator of literature and science, could his old fellow-workers have reasonably expected him to associate as much with them as ever? No one who knew the man can doubt that he would continue to regard them with kindness, that he would be willing to help and serve them within reasonable bounds, and that any particular old favourite would be as sure of a shake of his horny hand as ever, when accident threw them together. But it was manifestly impossible for Miller to be both what he now was and what he once was. Circumstances were changed, and he was changed with them. He had new associates, suitable to his present frame of intellectual and moral being, and he could not also keep up on the original terms with the old, for the two were wholly incompatible. It chanced that another man of genius, who rose about the same time from humble life to an equally high level in one of the fine arts, endeavoured, from a misjudging good-nature, to keep up with his old associates, instead of adopting new ones more suitable to his altered circumstances, and the consequence was that he got into wholly false positions, and was utterly deranged in his course of life. In an early state of society, such a man would have been quite safe with all his genius and its *éclat*; but the world chances to be some thousands of years old, and it has in the course of time crystallised into social

forms and rules which we cannot transgress with impunity.

There is, we suspect, another mistake in the views of Mr Jones and his compeers on matters of this kind. He considers Smith as having been formerly on his own level in mind and tastes, as well as in worldly circumstances, and complains accordingly as if there were no cause for the alienation but a change in the latter. But perhaps Smith was all the time a man of higher powers as well as higher tendencies, thrown by the mere accident of fortune into Jones's society, and good-naturedly to a certain extent enduring it, while aspiring to something better. The very progressiveness of some men, as compared with others, progressiveness in tastes above all, would account for much of that gradual separation which is continually seen taking place between them, without the necessity of presuming any lack of constancy or of kindly feeling in one of the parties.

It is strange, while by our adage, 'a man is known by his associates,' we practically acknowledge that men choose their society by elective affinity, and have a right to do so, that we should at the same time leave our neighbours so little freedom in the choice. There is no privilege of humanity in which there is more interference, more foolish censure, more want of reasonable judgment. Poor Smith and his woman-kind cannot make a single move in the social world, but the Joneses are upon him, misconstruing all his motives and aims, and this for no observable reason but that the Joneses would believe in anything before they would believe that there was any point of ineligibility about themselves. Mrs Smith never projects a dinner-party in perfect freedom. 'We have not room for the Joneses; they might be asked at another time; but then they will take offence if omitted from a party where we are to have the Browns—they will think it is because the Browns have got a rise lately, and are thought their superiors.' So the plan of the party—and a party, to be successful, demands a plan—has to be deranged and probably spoilt, in order to avoid giving offence in a quarter where there was no real occasion for taking it. Unfortunately, the acquaintances least appreciable for any attractive qualities, are just those who are always on the most ticklish terms with us, and therefore the most liable to be offended by any imagined slight; hence the most tyrannical over us, if we are good-natured enough to study and concede to them.

We are disposed to form acquaintances under the influence of the elective affinity, and we have to bear all the consequences of being presumed to do so; but in how many cases have we our associates assigned to us without any choice in the matter! Our son, while absent with his regiment, marries a thoughtless girl of mean tastes and ideas, with whom the circle of her husband's relations can never be harmonious. Old Tomkins foolishly takes a second wife, whom he imposes on his grown-up children as a person they must respect, the fact being that, while having some inscrutable charm in his eyes, she is disagreeable in those of most other persons. Brothers and sisters bring wives and husbands into the field, whose affinity of feeling with their new relatives is a mere matter of chance: they may or may not be 'pleasant people.' Your partners in business bring you associates, who are not to be avoided, however much they may be disrelished. In such ways you become half-surrounded with people whom you would never think of choosing as friends from any community of sympathy or taste, or from any approbation or esteem. There is here matter for much serious consideration—how to 'get along' with all these associates of accident. It is to be feared that the getting along is often of a halting kind, and that from this cause mainly spring those family quarrels which are remarked to be so much

bitterer than others. It would require great judgment, great patience, great good-nature, to steer well through such difficulties, even where there are respectable qualities on both sides. Where it is otherwise, or even where there is simply a decided antagonism of disposition, the matter must be all but hopeless. Still we cling to the belief that a Christian tolerance—a subjection of the passing feelings to the rule of a high moral principle—a higher kind of good-breeding—will avail much in softening away the worst difficulties of the kind.

Is it want of width of view that is the matter with the novelists, that they let so much of both the comedy and the tragedy of real life slip past them unworked up? Or is there something owing to the exigencies of art? Is it imperative that we always see, in their pages, the gifts of fortune avenged and redressed on a principle of contraries? Is there something in the mysterious abyss of human sympathies and antipathies, that makes us demand ridicule for the keepers of boarding-schools, a hateful description for a step-mother, and a pattern case of justice for a poor man at law? Perhaps so. But, if so, then we must pronounce that 'veluti in speculum' can never be an applicable motto for a book of fiction.

A YARN ABOUT SPINNING.

SOME five-and-twenty years ago, when the reform agitation was at its height, we chanced to be in a small country town in the west of Scotland on the very day when an open-air meeting, followed by a grand procession, was held in favour of the popularly desired measure. Previous, however, to the procession starting, a hitch took place in the proceedings, caused by a difference of opinion on the important question of precedence. The gardeners, as 'old Adam's likeness,' claimed to lead the van, on account of the antiquity of their calling. On the other hand, the tailors, claiming a still higher antiquity, insisted on their incontrovertible right to the post of honour; asserting that Adam was not required to cultivate the earth until his expulsion from the garden of Eden, whereas, previous to that time, he had exercised the craft of a tailor, by sewing a garment of fig-leaves. Long and wordy were the arguments; both sides displaying that thorough knowledge of the sacred writings, which no other people possess in so remarkable a degree as the Scotch. At last, whether by dint of argument, numerical force, or their evident desire of pugnaciously pushing the dispute to the *ultima ratio*, the tailors gained their point, and, with waving banners and sounds of music, the procession started.

That the arts of obtaining food and clothing have been practised from the earliest period, is a mere common-place truism known to all. Yet, while willingly admitting the great antiquity and usefulness of both gardeners and tailors, we must, nevertheless, assert that the human race is much more indebted to the spinsters, who, making the first advances in civilisation and refinement, relieved mankind from the necessity of wearing either leaves of trees or skins of beasts. Nor has the world been forgetful of the boon thus conferred upon it. The literature, proverbs, customs, superstitions, habits of thought, and modes of expression of most nations have reference to this important fact; while the distaff and spindle have been the type and symbol of female industry, and the natural insignia of the softer sex, in nearly every age and country.

Among the many popular fancies of the middle ages, there was none so widely spread, or so firmly held, as the belief that Eve, the mother of mankind, was the first spinster. Those most mendacious of humbugs, the old heraldic writers, unblushingly assert that the shield and lozenge, the distinguishing armorial symbols

of male and female, were severally derived from Adam's spade and Eve's spindle. The lines,

When Adam delved, and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?

formed the rallying-cry in many popular insurrections, as the people began to discover their own strength, and the hollow weakness of the feudal assumptions under which they were enslaved. The expulsion of our first parents from the garden of Eden was a favourite subject with the medieval sculptors and painters; and they almost invariably represented it in the following manner. Adam, as he passes out of the portal of the earthly paradise, receives, with an air of the most abject submission, a spade from the hands of an attendant angel; while Eve, already supplied with spinning materials, and apparently quite unabashed, holding up her head as if she had done no wrong, boldly struts forth, carrying her distaff, and twirling the spindle as she walks along. This bold demeanour, attributed to Eve, may be one of the unjust and petty slurs against the female character which the artists of the period delighted to perpetrate; or it may denote her confidence that the evil would eventually be remedied, that through her progeny the serpent's head would ultimately be crushed.

In one of the old religious plays, annually acted by the Franciscan friars on the festival of *Corpus Christi*, we find the same popular idea dramatically expressed. In the scene of the expulsion, Adam, with spade in hand, addressing Eve, says:

Let us walk into the land,
With right hard labour our food to find,
With delving and digging with my hand,
And, wife, to spin now must thou fend,
Our naked bodies in cloth to wind.

Eve, with her distaff and spindle, suiting the action to the word, and the word to the action, replies:

Alas! that ever we wrought this sin—
Our bodily sustenance for to win,
Thou must delve, and I must spin.

The allusions to spinning in the sacred writings are numerous and appropriate, pointing to the great antiquity of the art, as well as eulogising its professors. Abraham refused to take a thread of the spoil; flax was cultivated in the time of Moses; the women that were wise-hearted spun with their hands; those whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom spun goat's hair; and she, the virtuous woman *par excellence*, whose worth was above rubies, laid her hands to the distaff and the spindle.

By the classical writers of Greece and Rome, Minerva, as the instructress of man in the useful arts, was fabled to be the inventress of spinning. Homer speaks of a distaff being a present fit for a queen; and everybody has heard of the labours of Penelope, though Valerius, in *Coriolanus*, spitefully enough, says, that 'all the yarn she spun in Ulysses' absence only served to fill Ithaca full of moths.' Herodotus relates a pleasing story respecting the removal, by Darius, of the Pæonian and neighbouring tribes to the shores of Asia. The Pæonian brothers caused their sister, dressed in her best attire, to pass before the Persian monarch, carrying a vase upon her head, and a distaff in her girdle, and leading a horse with her left hand, while she twirled her spindle with the right. The king's attention being attracted by this unusual appearance, he kept the young woman in view, and saw her approach a fountain, fill the vase, water the horse, and return spinning as before. Darius immediately asked to what country she belonged, and was told Pæonia. Were all the females of that country equally industrious? he next inquired, and was told that they were so. The result was that the politic

monarch, considering that so diligent a people would be valuable subjects, had them all transported to his own territories in Asia.

Pliny tells us that the distaff and spindle of Caia, the queen of Tarquinius Priscus, was long preserved in the Temple of Fortune. This royal spinstress was considered to be the perfect model of a good wife; hence a distaff, charged with wool, and a spindle, were carried before a Roman bride; and when the marriage-procession reached the husband's house, she was asked her name, to which she replied Caia. The three Fates, who, according to the ancient mythology, presided over man's mundane existence, were spinners; one held the distaff, another spun, the third cut the thread of life. Catullus, however, in his beautiful poem on the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, describes all three as spinning. Affording an accurate description of the ancient mode of using the distaff and spindle, the lines are interesting:

And as their hands the sacred labour plied,
The left the distaff grasped, the right hand drew
The wool from thence, and twisted in the clew,
On the bent thumb the winding spindle held,
And as the whirlwind moves its course impelled.
Still as they spun, they bit off every shred
That roughly hung about the new-made thread.

A picture of Leda, on the wall of a house in Pompeii, represents a female spinning in exactly the same manner as is described by the above lines; and the peasant-girls of Italy still carry the distaff and twirl the spindle, as they did in the time of Caia. Yet, long 'ere Romulus and Remus had been suckled,' as we learn from paintings in the tombs of Beni-hassan, the yarn for 'the fine linen of Egypt' was spun in the same manner; and so do the wretched ophthalmia-stricken fellows of Egypt still spin in the shade of the great pyramid. Mummy has become merchandise, Pharaoh has been sold for balsam, and, as that has gone out of fashion, even the eagle and fasces, symbols of imperial dominion and consular power, have long since been swept away; but the distaff and spindle, emblems of domestic peace and household cares, still remain. Their history, if it could be written, would be the history of the human race: the same aims and aspirations, wants and wishes, hopes and fears, have been experienced by millions of the various nations, tribes, religions, colours, and tongues, who have used these simple implements.

Among our Saxon ancestors, the terms *spear-half* and *spindle-half* expressed the male and female lines of descent; and in their tombs, we find a spear beside the skeleton of a man, a spindle with the remains of a woman. In Germany, even at the present day, the jurists divide families into male and female by the titles of *swertt-magen* and *spindel-magen*—in other words, sword-members and spindle-members. Among the ancient Franks, when a free woman formed an attachment to a slave, she was summoned before the elders of the tribe, who, in open council, offered her the choice of a sword or a spindle. If she accepted the former, she not only retained the freedom, which was her birthright, but also acquired supremacy over the serf with whose fortunes she had connected herself; on the contrary, if she chose the spindle, she reduced herself to the level of her lover.

The French law, by which 'No woman shall succeed in Salic land,' has been expressed in popular phraseology by the words, *le royaume de France ne tombe point en quenouille*—the kingdom of France never falls under the distaff. The well known *fleur de lis* is said to have been adopted as the regal cognizance of France, in allusion to the Salic code, and with reference to the passage of Scripture respecting the lilies of the field—'they toil not, neither do they spin.'

When the royal sepulchres of France, in the abbey of St Denis, were disgracefully desecrated at the period of the first revolution, several distaves and spindles, richly gilt, were found in the tombs of various queens. In Germany, it is still as customary to suspend a distaff and spindle over the tomb of a lady, as it is to place a sword and helmet over that of a knight. Pennant tells us that he saw a distaff, carved in stone, on the tomb of Alice, prioress of the nunnery of Emanuel, in Stirlingshire. The most remarkable instance of this kind in England is the tomb of Judge Pollard, of the Common Pleas, who died in 1540. On one side of the judge's tomb are the stone-carved effigies of his eleven stalwart sons, each girded with a sword; on the other, are represented his eleven fair daughters, each carrying a spindle. A curious story is related of the bustling housewife, the mother of those twenty and two children. When twenty only of them had been born, the lady, in commemoration of her large family, erected a magnificent painted window in her seat of Ninnet Bishop in Gloucestershire; and on this window she caused to be depicted herself and husband, with their ten sons and ten daughters. By some mistake, the artist left a blank space, which the lady ordered to be filled up by another son and daughter; and, as quaint old Fuller tells us, 'her expectancy came to pass in accordance.'

About the very time when matronly Dame Pollard was erecting her painted window, events of much greater importance were in progress. The spinning-wheel that worked with the foot was invented, and in course of introduction into England. Previous to this invention, spinning, though a most necessary art, was merely the occupation of female leisure; the employment of high and low, rich and poor, in the intervals of more important business, and during the long, tedious nights of winter. Fitzherbert, a writer on husbandry in the earlier part of Henry the VIII's reign, says: 'Let thy distaff be always ready for a pastime, that thou be not idle; undoubted a woman cannot get her living by spinning on a distaff, yet it stoppeth a gap, and yarn must needs be had.' But, through the more rapid production of yarn by the wheel, enabling a few to spin for many, spinning became a means of obtaining a livelihood, the higher classes had less necessity to practise it, and, consequently, the time-honoured appellation of *spinster* sank considerably in the social scale. That title, which in the primitive period of the distaff and spindle had been given to royal princesses, after the invention of the wheel, became legally applicable only to unmarried females under the rank of viscount's daughters. A somewhat similar change has been caused in our own time by the invention of the machine, and consequent extinction of the spinning-wheel. In Sir Richard Steele's *Spinster*, published in 1719, the daughters of wealthy farmers are among the spinners of linen and woollen, who petition against the use of the 'tawdry, pie-spotted, flabby, ragged, low-priced thing called calico; a foreigner by birth; made the Lord knows where, by a parcel of heathens and pagans that worship the devil, and work for a halfpenny a day.' Randle Holme, writing about the same time, describes three kinds of wheels then in use: the country, or farmer's wheel; the city, or gentlewoman's wheel; and the girdle wheel, which, being carried at the girdle, could be used when walking about. This last, Randle says, was 'a little wheel with gigam-bobs, pleasing to ladies that love not to overtoil themselves.' Indeed, down to the present century, the wheel was sedulously plied by ladies of slender income. There are men alive now, riding in their carriages, who were indebted for their first start in life to their mother's wheel. Many a college expense has it aided to defray, many an Indian outfit has it helped to purchase. But the wheel, emblem of 'variations and mutabilities,' as

Fluellen says, is subject to the very changes it so aptly symbolises. It is persons of much lower standing in the social scale who now wait in the halls of the giant Steam, to tend the whirling bobbins of the many-spindled mule and jenny.

The quantity of yarn produced by a good spinner from the wheel in a certain time depended principally upon its fineness. From *The Two Dogs*, we learn that a hank or twelve cuts was considered a fair day's work:

A country lassie at her wheel,
Her dizen done, she's unco weel.

But the spinners of Tyrone, who had the reputation of being the best in Ireland, thought two dozen no extraordinary task; and at their kemps, or contests of skill in spinning, they frequently produced as many as four dozen in one day. The native Irish—we use the term in contradistinction to the descendants of Scotch and English settlers—had songs specially composed and appropriated for singing at the wheel. Three of those 'spinning-wheel songs' are preserved in Bunting's *Ancient Music*; and the keen or funeral-cry of young Ryan, translated from Irish by the late Mr Croker, commences thus:

Maidens, sing no more in gladness
To your merry spinning-wheels;
Join the keener's voice of sadness,
Feel for what a mother feels.

The able authoress of *A Woman's Thoughts about Women*, in a late number (184) of this Journal, speaking of the needle, says it is 'a wonderful brightener and consoler; our weapon of defence against slothfulness, weariness, and sad thoughts; our thrifty helper in poverty; our pleasant friend at all times.' In the mediæval period, when men were women's tailors, the needle was little used by females, but the spindle and distaff, being their constant companions, afforded the same benefits and consolations to the sisterhood as the needle does now. Curiously enough, an old proverbial Latin verse, of the kind termed Leonine, actually alludes to this fact, though in other respects unjust to the sex:

Fallere, flere, nere, dedit Deus in muliere;
which Chaucer thus translates in his prologue to the *Wife of Bath's Tale*:

Deceit, weeping, spinning, God hath give
To women kindly, while they may live.

Besides being the universal, and we may say natural symbols of the softer sex, and their unfailing source of profit and pastime, the spindle and distaff were also their legitimate offensive and defensive weapons. In the south of Europe, the keen-pointed steel spindle has often served as a stiletto; while in the north, the large distaff could readily be used as a club. 'We'll thrack him hence with distaves,' says Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*; again, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *King and no King*, a paltry fellow is spoken of as one 'so below a beating that the women find him not worthy of their distaves.' Goneril, in *King Lear*, alluding to the 'cowish terror' of her helpmate, says: 'I must change arms at home, and give the distaff into my husband's hands.' The wife of the immortal host of the Tabard, also, when she found her husband unwilling to resent her fancied injuries, exclaims:

I will have thy knife,
And thou shalt have my distaff, and go spin.

Chaucer, in another place, in the *Nonne Prestre's Tale*, shews the use of the distaff on an emergency. When Dan Russell the fox, runs off with Chanticleer the cock, the widow and her daughters cry:

Harrow and well-a-way!
Ha, ha, the fox! And after him they ran,
And eke with staves many another man;
Ran Colley our dog, and Talbot and Garland,
And Malkin with her distaff in her hand.

One of the most curious of the early printed books, that are embellished with wood-cuts, is well known to connoisseurs as *The Shepherd's Calendar*. A chapter of this rare work is entitled, 'Of an Assault against a Snail.' The accompanying wood-cut represents a fortified palace. Upon one of the most accessible towers there is a snail, with head protruded and horns elevated, evidently in an attitude of defence. Two soldiers, fully equipped, and a woman, armed only with a distaff, form the assaulting-party against the snail-defended tower. In the letter-press, the snail defies his opponents, telling them that his strength and valour are fully commensurate with his terrific appearance, and concludes his braggadocio thus:

If that these armed men approach me near,
I shall them vanquish every one,
But they dare not for fear of me alone.

The snail has a correct opinion of his antagonists' courage. The soldiers, like the ancient Pistol, use 'brave words,' but that is all. Commencing their speech with the words, 'Horrible snail!' they threaten to eat him with pepper and salt, but end with the impotent conclusion of merely requesting their horned enemy to abandon the tower:

Get thee hence, by our advice,
Out of this place of so rich edifice,
We thee require, if it be thy will,
And let us have this tower that we come till.

The woman, however, exhibits more pluck than her male companions, soldiers though they be. Brandishing her distaff, she exclaims:

Go out of this place, thou right ugly beast,
Which of the vines the tender shoots doth eat.
Out of this place, or I shall thee sore beat
With my distaff, between the horns twain,
That it shall sound into the realm of Spain.

This 'assault against a snail' has been a grievous puzzle to antiquaries. Mr Offor, in England, asks: 'What does it all mean?' M. Nisard, in France, says that it is an insoluble enigma. The following nursery-rhyme, however, which we quote for the gratification of the curious, seems to sufficiently explain, at least to our own satisfaction, the mysterious affair:

Four-and-twenty tailors went to kill a snail,
The best man amongst them durst not touch her tail;
She put out her horns like a great Kylene cow—
Run, tailors, run, or she'll kill you all enow.

Nor has the rock, the modern representative of the distaff, been found less useful as an offensive weapon than its predecessor. An episode in domestic life, known in Scottish song as the *Weary Pound of Tow*, is much too natural to be wholly unfounded on fact:

I bought my wife a stone of lint,
As good as e'er did grow;
And all that she has made of it
Is one poor pound of tow.
Quoth I: 'For shame, thou idle dame!
Go spin your top of tow.'
She took the rock, and with a knock,
She broke it o'er my pow.

When a French peasant wishes to designate the golden age of his country, the good old times as we often absurdly enough phrase it, he says it was in the days when Queen Bertha spun—*au temps que la reine Bertha filait*. This is generally understood to refer to a certain, or rather very uncertain, long-footed, or, according to some authorities, goose-footed Bertha, who figures in romantic legend as the mother of Charlemagne. But, allowing for difference of language, the same saying (*nel tempo ove Berta filava*), with exactly the same signification, is current in Italy. Who, then, was Bertha? A clue to her real character is found in *The Gospels of Distaves* (*Les Evangiles des*

Queenouilles), one of those extraordinary old French works known as *jojonsetes*, and which mingle Christianity with paganism, piety with obscenity, and sound sense with the absurdest superstition. One of the preachers, in this remarkable production, is a Dame Bertha of the Horn, who can be readily identified with the spinning Queen Bertha of French romance, on the one hand, and with a Frau Berta of German superstition, on the other. This Frau Berta, sometimes termed Fricke, still holds a conspicuous position in the folk-lore of Northern Germany. She visits the farmhouses and peasants' cottages during the twelve nights immediately succeeding Christmas. She inspects the condition of the spinning-wheels, and is particularly pleased to find all the flax spun off from the rocks. The maidens who are tidy and industrious spinners, she rewards with all kinds of good-luck; while she showers misfortunes on the lazy and the sluttish. And we have had her here, even in England, but in the character of a saint. Of the many miracles ascribed to St Bertha, we need only mention one. A convent founded by her was deficient of water, but, by merely drawing her distaff along the ground, she formed a noble aqueduct, copiously supplied with the pure liquid, for the use of the establishment. Her festival, termed St Distaff's Day, was kept on the morning after Twelfth-day, and Herrick thus alludes to it:

Partly work and partly play,
You must on St Distaff's Day.
If the maids a-spinning go,
Burn the flax, and fire the tow.

In short, Queen Bertha of the long-foot, and Dame Bertha of the Horn, Berta the fairy, and Bertha the saint, are all derived from one source, being the modern representatives of a much more ancient patroness of spinners, the Herthus or Frija of the Scandinavian mythology. It has been truly said that the religion of one era becomes the superstitions of the next. The three well-known stars in Orion's belt, which Scottish peasants term 'the ell-wand,' were known to the ancient Northmen as Frija's Distaff; but since the introduction of Christianity among them, those stars have been termed Mary's Rock.

The ramifications of popular superstitions are widely spread. One of the Roman rural laws forbade a woman to spin on the highway, it being considered an inauspicious omen to the travellers who might meet her so employed. Nearly two thousand years later, the very same notion was common in France. In the *Gospels of Distaves*, we read that it is exceedingly unlucky for a man travelling on horseback to pass a woman spinning; he should either put off his journey, or avoid her by turning back and going another way. In the Isle of Man, and also in Northern Germany, it was considered sinful to spin on Saturday; and the peasantry still relate a story of two old women, indefatigable spinners, who would spin on that day. At last one of them died; and while the survivor was spinning on the following Saturday, the deceased appeared to her, and holding out a dreadfully burned hand, said:

'Behold what I have justly won,
Because on Saturday I spun.'

In the Scottish cottage and farmhouse, the wheel was always carefully put away at an early hour of the Saturday afternoon; not from any superstitious feeling, but out of respect for the approaching day of rest. There was, however, a curious feeling connected with the reel in Scotland, no later than in the times of the grandmothers of many now living. The reel, registering the amount of yarn wound upon it, was looked upon as an approach to a magical contrivance, and with a conscientious feeling of avoiding the slightest

tampering with forbidden arts, numbers of Scottish matrons never used the 'winnle blades,' but measured their yarn by winding it over the left hand and elbow, repeating a certain formula to aid the memory in retaining the reckoning. The useful agricultural implement for winnowing corn, termed a fan, was long unused in Scotland for a similar reason. As another illustration of this feeling, we are induced to copy the following paragraph in full from the *Scots Magazine* of 1756. Without giving the whole, we would despair of affording the reader a correct idea of the curious affair:

'Peter Pairny, servant to Mr Thomas Muir, minister of the Seceding congregation at Orwell, who worked his wheel-plough, was lately accused before the session of using pranks something like enchantments, pretending to stop or render unfit for service a wheel-plough, by touching the beam with a rod, and bidding the plough stop till he should lose (loose) it. The session agreed to declare him under scandal, to debar him from sealing ordinances till the offence be purged; and to ordain him to appear and be publicly rebuked; at the same time leaving room for further inquiry into the matter, and for inflicting what further censure may be judged necessary. This sentence was intimated from his pulpit by Mr Muir on Sunday, September 12th, and the man appeared and was rebuked.'

If Pairny had lived a hundred years earlier, in all probability he would have been burned; if a hundred years later, he might have been honoured and fêted as a benefactor of his race. But we are wandering from the thread of our discourse, and the length of our yarn warns us to cut it short, and reel up, without more than alluding to the numerous songs, anecdotes, proverbs, and homely tales connected with hand-spinning, an art, in most places, completely passed out of recollection; for the spinning-wheel, after superseding the distaff and spindle, was in its turn deposed by machinery worked by steam. Like the black-jack, the wheel of the turnspit dog, the pillion, and the pack-saddle, the spinning-wheel is now almost unknown, save as a relic of the past. As such, it may sometimes be found on the upper back-shelf of a museum or collection of antiquities. And when we take into consideration that a steam-engine will whirl 150,000 spindles at once, rattling off 30,000 miles of yarn in an hour, at an expense of less than a halfpenny for every six miles—that the thousands of women tending steam-spinning machines earn more in one day than they could have earned in a week by hand-spinning—we may, in spite of all the pleasing associations and recollections of the spinning-wheel, be very well contented to leave it on the shelf: its work is done—our yarn is spun.

OCEOLA:

A ROMANCE.

CHAPTER LXXII.—THE CONDITION OF BLACK JAKE.

WE had escaped from the block-house in boats, down the river to its mouth, and by sea to St Marks. Thence the volunteers scattered to their homes—their term of service having expired. They went as they listed; journeying alone, or in straggling squads of three and four together.

One of these groups consisted of old Hickman the hunter, a companion of like kidney, myself, and my ever-faithful henchman.

Jake was no longer the 'Black Jake' of yore. A sad change had come over his external aspect. His cheek-bones stood prominently out, while the cheeks themselves had fallen in; his eyeballs had retreated far within their sockets, and the neglected wool stood out over his temples in a thick frizzled shock. His skin had lost its fine ebony polish, and shewed

distinct traces of corrugation. Wherever 'scratched' by his now elongated finger-nails, a whitish dandruff surface was exhibited.

The poor fellow had fared badly in the block-house; and three weeks of positive famine had played sad havoc with his outward man.

Starvation, however, but little affected his spirits. Throughout all, he had preserved his jovial mood, and his light humour often roused me from my despondency. While gnawing the corn cob, and washing down the dry maize with a gourd of cold water, he would indulge in rapturous visions of 'hominny and hog-meat,' to be devoured whenever it should please fate to let him return to the 'ole plantayshun.' Such delightful prospects of future enjoyment enabled him the better to endure the pinching present—for anticipation has its joys. Now that we were free, and actually heading homeward; now that his visions were certain soon to become realities, Jake's joviality could no longer be kept within bounds; his tongue was constantly in motion; his mouth ever open with the double tier of 'ivories' displayed in a continuous smile; while his skin seemed to be rapidly recovering its dark oily lustre.

Jake was the soul of our party, as we trudged wearily along; and his gay jokes affected even the staid old hunters, at intervals eliciting from both loud peals of laughter.

For myself, I scarcely shared their mirth—only now and then, when the sallies of my follower proved irresistible. There was a gloom over my spirit, which I could not comprehend.

It should have been otherwise. I should have felt happy at the prospect of returning home—of once more beholding those who were dear—but it was not so.

It had been so on my first getting free from our block-house prison; but this was only the natural reaction, consequent upon escape from what appeared almost certain death. My joy had been short-lived: it was past and gone; and now that I was nearing my native home, dark shadows came over my soul; a presentiment was upon me that all was not well.

I could in no way account for this feeling, for I had heard no evil tidings. In truth, I had heard nothing of home or of friends for a period of nearly two months. During our long siege, no communication had ever reached us; and at St Marks we met but slight news from the settlements of the Suwanee. We were returning in ignorance of all that had transpired there during our absence—if aught had transpired worthy of being known.

This ignorance itself might have produced uncertainty, doubt, even apprehension; but it was not the sole cause of my presentiment. Its origin was different. Perhaps the recollection of my abrupt departure—the unsettled state in which I had left the affairs of our family—the parting scene, now vividly recalled—remembrances of Ringgold—reflections upon the wicked designs of this wily villain—all these may have contributed to form the apprehensions under which I was suffering. Two months was a long period; many events could happen within two months, even in the narrow circle of one's own family. Long since it had been reported that I had perished at the hands of the Indian foe; I was believed to be dead, at home, wherever I was known; and the belief might have led to ill results. Was my sister still true to her word, so emphatically pronounced in that hour of parting? Was I returning home to find her still my loved sister? Still single and free? or had she yielded to maternal solicitation, and become the wife of the vile catiff after all?

With such conjectures occupying my thoughts, no wonder I was not in a mood for merriment. My

companions noticed my dejection, and, in their rude but kind way, rallied me as we rode along. They failed, however, to make me cheerful like themselves. I could not cast the load from my heart. Try as I would, the presentiment lay heavy upon me, that all was not well.

Alas, alas! the presentiment proved true—no, not true, but worse—worse than my worst apprehensions—worse even than that I had most feared.

The news that awaited me was not of marriage, but of death—the death of my mother—and worse than death—horrid doubt of my sister's fate. Before reaching home, a messenger met me—one who told an appalling tale.

The Indians had attacked the settlement, or rather my own plantation—for their foray had gone no further: my poor mother had fallen under their savage knives; my uncle too; and my sister? *She had been carried off!*

I stayed to hear no more; but, driving the spurs into my jaded horse, galloped forward like one suddenly smitten with madness.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

A SAD SPECTACLE.

My rate of speed soon brought me within the boundaries of the plantation; and, without pausing to breath my horse, I galloped on, taking the path that led most directly to the house. It was not the main road, but a wood-path here and there closed up with 'bars.' My horse was a spirited animal, and easily leaped over them.

I met a man coming from the direction of the house—a white man—a neighbour. He made motions as if to speak—no doubt, of the calamity. I did not stop to listen. I had heard enough. My eyes alone wanted satisfaction.

I knew every turn of the path. I knew the points where I should first come in sight of the house.

I reached it, and looked forward—Father of mercy! there was no house to be seen!

Half-bewildered, I reined up my horse. I strained my eyes over the landscape—in vain—no house.

Had I taken the wrong road, or was I looking in the wrong direction? No—no. There stood the giant tulip-tree, that marked the embouchure of the path. There stretched the savanna; beyond it the home-fields of indigo and maize; beyond these the dark wood-knoll of the hommock; but beyond this last there was nothing—nothing I could recognise.

The whole landscape appeared to have undergone a change. The gay white walls—the green *jalousies*—the cheerful aspect of home, that from that same spot had so often greeted me returning hungry and wearied from the hunt—were no longer to be seen. The sheds, the negro-cabins, the offices, even the palings had disappeared. From their steads I beheld thick volumes of smoke ascending to the sky, and rolling over the sun till his disc was red. The heavens were frowning upon me.

From what I had already learned, the spectacle was easy of comprehension. It caused no new emotion either of surprise or pain. I was not capable of suffering more.

Again putting my horse to his speed, I galloped across the fields towards the scene of desolation.

As I neared the spot, I could perceive the forms of men moving about through the smoke. There appeared to be fifty or a hundred of them. Their motions did not betoken excitement. Only a few were moving at all, and these with a leisurely gait, that told they were not in action. The rest stood in groups, in lounging attitudes, evidently mere spectators of the conflagration. They were making no attempt to extinguish the flames, which I now observed

mingling with the smoke. A few were rushing to and fro—most of them on horseback—apparently in the endeavour to catch some horses and cattle, that, having escaped from the burnt enclosure, were galloping over the fields neighing and lowing.

One might have fancied that the men around the fire were those who had caused it; and for a moment such an idea was in my mind. The messenger had said that the foray had just taken place—that very morning at daybreak. It was all I had heard, as I hurried away.

It was yet early—scarcely an hour after sunrise—for we had been travelling by night to avoid the hot hours. Were the savages still upon the ground? Were those men Indians? In the lurid light, amidst the smoke, chasing the cattle—as if with the intention of driving them off—the conjecture was probable enough.

But the report said they had gone away: how else could the details have been known?—the murder of my mother, the abduction of my poor sister? With the savages still upon the ground, how had these facts been ascertained?

Perhaps they had gone, and returned again to collect the booty, and fire the buildings? For an instant, such fancies were before my mind.

They had no influence in checking my speed. I never thought of tightening the rein—my bridle-arm was not free; with both hands I was grasping the ready rifle.

Vengeance had made me mad. Even had I been certain that the dark forms before me were those of the murderers, I was determined to dash forward into their midst, and perish upon the body of a savage.

I was not alone. The black was at my heels; and, close behind, I could hear the clattering hoofs of the hunters' horses.

We galloped up to the selvidge of the smoke. The deception was at an end. They were not Indians or enemies, but friends who stood around, and who hailed our approach neither with words nor shouts, but with the ominous silence of sympathy.

I pulled up by the fire, and dismounted from my horse: men gathered around me with looks of deep meaning. They were speechless—no one uttered a word. All saw that it was a tale that needed no telling.

I was myself the first to speak. In a voice so husky as scarcely to be heard, I inquired: 'Where?'

The interrogatory was understood—it was anticipated. One had already taken me by the hand, and was leading me gently around the fire. He said nothing, but pointed towards the hommock. Unresistingly I walked by his side.

As we neared the pond, I observed a larger group than any I had yet seen. They were standing in a ring, with their faces turned inward, and their eyes bent upon the earth. *I knew she was there.*

At our approach, the men looked up, and suddenly the ring opened—both sides mechanically drawing back. He who had my hand conducted me silently onward, till I stood in their midst. I looked upon the corpse of my mother.

Beside it was the dead body of my uncle, and beyond the bodies of several black men—faithful slaves, who had fallen in defence of their master and mistress.

My poor mother!—shot—stabbed—scalped. Even in death had she been defeatured!

Though I had anticipated it, the spectacle shocked me.

My poor mother! Those glassy eyes would never smile upon me again—those pale lips would neither chide nor cheer me more.

I could control my emotions no longer. I burst into tears; and, falling upon the earth, flung my arms

around the corpse, and kissed the cold mute lips of her who had given me birth.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

TO THE TRAIL.

My grief was profound—even to misery. The remembrance of occasional moments of coldness on the part of my mother—the remembrance more especially of the last parting scene—rendered my anguish acute. Had we but parted in affection—in the friendly confidence of former years—my loss would have been easier to endure. But no; her last words to me were spoken in reproach—almost in anger—and it was the memory of these that now so keenly embittered my thoughts. I would have given the world could she have heard but one word—to know how freely I forgave her.

My poor mother! all was forgiven. Her faults were few and venial. I remembered them not. Ambition was her only sin—among those of her station, almost universal—but I remembered it no more. I remembered only her many virtues—only that she was my mother. Never until that moment had I known how dearly I loved her.

It was no time to indulge in grief. Where was my sister?

I sprang to my feet, as I gave wild utterance to the interrogatory.

It was answered only by signs. Those around me pointed to the forest. I understood the signs—the savages had borne her away.

Up to this hour I had felt no hostility towards the red men; on the contrary, my sentiments had an opposite inclination. If not friendship for them, I had felt something akin to it. I was conscious of the many wrongs they had endured, and were now enduring at the hands of our people. I knew that in the end they would be conquered, and must submit. I had felt sympathy for their unfortunate condition.

It was gone. The sight of my murdered mother produced an instantaneous change in my feelings; and sympathy for the savage was supplanted by fierce hostility. Her blood called aloud for vengeance, and my heart was eager to obey the summons.

As I rose to my feet, I registered vows of revenge.

I stood not alone. Old Hickman and his fellow-hunter were at my back, and fifty others joined their voices in a promise to aid me in the pursuit.

Black Jake was among the loudest who clamoured for retribution. He too had sustained his loss. Viola was nowhere to be found—she had been carried off with the other domestics. Some may have gone voluntarily, but all were absent—all who were not dead. The plantation and its people had no longer an existence. I was homeless as well as motherless.

There was no time to be wasted in idle sorrowing; immediate action was required, and determined upon. The people had come to the ground armed and ready, and a few minutes sufficed to prepare for the pursuit.

A fresh horse was procured for myself; others for the companions of my late journey; and after snatching a breakfast hastily prepared, we mounted, and struck off upon the trail of the savages.

It was easily followed, for the murderers had been mounted, and their horses' tracks betrayed them.

They had gone some distance up the river before crossing, and then swam their horses over to the Indian side. Without hesitation, we did the same.

The place I remembered well. I had crossed there before—two months before—while tracking the steed of Oçoola. It was the path that had been taken by the young chief. The coincidence produced upon me a certain impression; and not without pain did I observe it.

It led to reflection. There was time, as the trail

was in places less conspicuous, and the finding it delayed our advance. It led to inquiry.

Had any one seen the savages?—or noted to what band they belonged? Who was their leader?

Yes. All these questions were answered in the affirmative. Two men, lying concealed by the road, had seen the Indians passing away—had seen their captives, too; my sister—Viola—with other girls of the plantation. These were on horseback, each clasped in the arms of a savage. The blacks travelled afoot. They were not bound. They appeared to go willingly. The Indians were 'Redsticks'—led by *Oceola*.

Such was the belief of those around me, founded upon the report of the men who had lain in ambush.

It is difficult to describe the impression produced upon me. It was painful in the extreme. I endeavoured not to believe the report. I resolved not to give it credence, until I should have further confirmation of its truthfulness.

Oceola! O heavens! Surely he would not have done this deed? It could not have been he?

The men might have been mistaken. It was before daylight the savages had been seen. The darkness might have deceived them. Every feat performed by the Indians—every foray made—was put down to the credit of *Oceola*. *Oceola* was everywhere. Surely he had not been there?

Who were the two men—the witnesses? Not without surprise did I listen to the answer. They were *Spence and Williams*!

To my surprise, too, I now learned that they were among the party who followed me—volunteers to aid me in obtaining revenge for my wrongs!

Strange, I thought; but stranger still that *Arens Ringgold* was not there. He had been present at the scene of the conflagration; and, as I was told, among the loudest in his threats of vengeance. But he had returned home; at all events, he was not one of the band of pursuers.

I called *Spence* and *Williams*, and questioned them closely. They adhered to their statement. They admitted that it was dark when they had seen the Indians returning from the massacre. They could not tell for certain whether they were the warriors of the 'Redstick' tribe, or those of the 'Long Swamp.' They believed them to be the former. As to who was their leader, they had no doubt whatever. It was *Oceola* who led them. They knew him by the three ostrich feathers in his head-dress, which rendered him conspicuous among his followers.

These fellows spoke positively. What interest could they have in deceiving me? What could it matter to them, whether the chief of the murderous band was *Oceola*, *Coa Hajo*, or *Onopa* himself?

Their words produced conviction—combined with other circumstances, deep painful conviction. The murderer of my mother—he who had fired my home, and borne my sister into a cruel captivity—could be no other than *Oceola*.

All memory of our past friendship died upon the instant. My heart burned with hostility and hate, for him it had once so ardently admired.

CHAPTER LXXV.

THE ALARM.

There were other circumstances connected with the bloody affair, that upon reflection appeared peculiar and mysterious. By the sudden shock, my soul had been completely benighted; and these circumstances had escaped my notice. I merely believed that there had been an onslaught of the Indians, in which my mother had been massacred, and my sister borne away from her home—that the savages, not satisfied with blood, had added fire—that these outrages had

been perpetrated in revenge for past wrongs, endured at the hands of their pale-faced enemies—that the like had occurred elsewhere, and was almost daily occurring—why not on the banks of the *Suwanee*, as in other districts of the country? In fact, it had been rather a matter of wonder, that the settlement had been permitted to remain so long unmolested. Others—far more remote from the *Seminole* strongholds—had already suffered a like terrible visitation; and why should ours escape? The immunity had been remarked, and the inhabitants had become lulled by it into a false security.

The explanation given was that the main body of the Indians had been occupied elsewhere, watching the movements of *Scott's* triple army; and, as our settlement was strong, no small band had dared to come against it.

But *Scott* was now gone—his troops had retired within the forts—their summer quarters—for winter is the season of campaigning in *Florida*; and the Indians, to whom all seasons were alike, were now free to extend their marauding expeditions against the trans-border plantations.

This appeared the true explanation why an attack upon the settlement of the *Suwanee* had been so long deferred.

During the first burst of my grief, on receiving news of the calamity, I accepted it as such: I and mine had merely been the victims of a general vengeance.

But the moments of bewilderment soon passed; and the peculiar circumstances, to which I have alluded, began to make themselves apparent to my mind.

First of all, why was our plantation the only one that had been attacked?—our house the only one given to the flames?—our family the only one murdered?

These questions startled me: and natural it was that they did so. There were other plantations along the river equally unprotected—other families far more noted for their hostility to the *Seminole* race—nay, what was yet a greater mystery, the *Ringgold* plantation lay in the very path of the marauders; as their trail testified, they had passed around it to reach our house; and both *Arens Ringgold* and his father had long been notorious for bitter enmity to the red men, and violent aggressions against their rights.

Why, then, had the *Ringgold* plantation been suffered to remain unmolested, while ours was singled out for destruction? Were we the victims of a particular and special vengeance?

It must have been so; beyond doubt, it was so. After long reflection, I could arrive at no other conclusion. By this alone could the mystery be solved.

And *Powell*—oh! could it have been he?—my friend, a fiend guilty of such an atrocious deed? Was it probable? was it possible? No—neither.

Despite the testimony of the two men—vile wretches I knew them to be—despite what they had seen and said—my heart refused to believe it.

What motive could he have for such special murder?—ah! what motive?

True, my mother had been unkind to him—more than that, ungrateful; she had once treated him with scorn. I remembered it well—he, too, might remember it.

But surely he, the noble youth—to my mind, the *beau idéal* of heroism—would scarcely have harboured such petty spite, and for so long?—would scarcely have repayed it by an act of such bloody retribution? No—no—no.

Besides, would *Powell* have left untouched the dwelling of the *Ringolds*? of *Arens Ringgold*, one of his most hated foes—one of the four men he had

sworn to kill? This of itself was the most improbable circumstance connected with the whole affair.

Ringgold had been at home—might have been entrapped in his sleep—his black retainers would scarcely have resisted; at all events, they could have been overcome as easily as ours.

Why was *he* permitted to live? Why was *his* house not given to the flames?

Upon the supposition that Ogeola was the leader of the band, I could not comprehend why he should have left Arens Ringgold to live, while killing those who were scarcely his enemies.

New information, imparted to me as we advanced along the route, produced new reflections. I was told that the Indians had made a hasty departure—that they had, in fact, retreated. The conflagration had attracted a large body of citizen soldiery—a patrol upon its rounds—and the appearance of these, unexpected by the savages, had caused the latter to scamper off to the woods. But for this, it was conjectured other plantations would have suffered the fate of ours—perhaps that of Ringgold himself.

The tale was probable enough. The band of marauders was not large—we knew by their tracks there were not more than fifty of them—and this would account for their retreat on the appearance even of a smaller force. The people alleged that it was a retreat.

This information gave a different complexion to the affair—I was again driven to conjectures—again forced into suspicious of Ogeola.

Perhaps I but half understood his Indian nature; perhaps, after all, *he* was the monster who had struck the blow.

Once more I interrogated myself as to his motive—what motive?

Ha! my sister, Virginia— O God! could love—passion—

'The Indyens! Indyens! Indyens!'

Cousin Robert.

O Cousin Robert, far away
Among the lands of gold,
How many years since we two met?
You would not like it told.

O Cousin Robert, buried deep
Amid your bags of gold,
I dreamt of you but yesternight,
Just as you were of old.

You own whole leagues—I, half a rood
Behind my quiet door:
You have your laces of gold rupees,
And I my children four.

Your tall barques dot the dangerous seas,
My 'ship's come home'—to rest
Safe anchored from the storms of life
Upon one faithful breast.

And it would cause nor start, nor sigh,
Nor thought of doubt or blame,
If I should teach our little son,
Our Cousin Robert's name.

That name—however wide it rings,
I oft think, when alone,
I rather would have seen it graved
Upon a church-yard stone—

Upon the white sunshiny stone
Where Cousin Alick lies;
Ah, sometimes, woe to him that lives!
And blessed he that dies!

O Cousin Robert, hot, hot tears,
Though not the tears of old,
Drop, thinking of your face last night,
Your hand's pathetic fold:

A young man's face—so like, so like
Our mothers' faces fair;
A young man's hand, so firm to hold,
So resolute to dare.

I thought you good—I wished you great;
You were my hope, my pride:
To know you good, to make you great,
I once had happy died;

To tear the plague-spot from that heart,
Place honour on that brow,
See old age come in crown'd peace,
I almost would die now;

Would give—all that's now mine to give,
To have you sitting there,
The Cousin Robert of my youth—
A beggar with gray hair.

O Robert, Robert, some that live
Are dead, long ere grown old:
Better the pure heart of our youth
Than palaces of gold.

Better the blind faith of our youth
Than doubt, which all truth braves:
Better to mourn—God's children dear,
Than laugh—the devil's slaves.

O Robert, Robert, life is sweet,
And love is countless gain,
Yet if I think of you, my heart
Is stabbed with sudden pain:

And as in peace this holy eve
I close our Christmas-doors,
And kiss good-night o'er sleeping heads—
Such bonny curls! like yours—

I fall upon my bended knees
With sobs that choke each word—
'On those who err and are deceived
Have mercy, O good LORD!'

THE INK OF THE ANCIENTS.

In a letter from Mr Joseph Ellis, of Brighton, addressed to the *Society of Arts' Journal*, he states that, by making a solution of shellac with borax, in water, and adding a suitable proportion of pure lamp-black, an ink is producible which is indestructible by time or by chemical agents, and which, on drying, will present a polished surface, as with the ink found on the Egyptian papyrus. He made ink in the way described, and proved, if not its identity with that of ancient Egypt, yet the correctness of the formula which has been given him by the late Mr Charles Hatchett, F.R.S.

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